

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEGUCI 02440 231707Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
ACDA-12 HA-05 AID-05 MCE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EUR-12
/103 W

-----090009 240215Z /63

R 231537Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 449
INFO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2440

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PING, SHUM, SNAR, MASS, MORG, MPOL, XK, HO
SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH THE CHIEF OF STATE: ARMS ACQUISITIONS
AND POLICE BRUTALITY

REF: STATE 122854

1. ACCOMPANIED BY THE DCM, I CALLED ON CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR MAY 22, AND AT THE END OF OUR CONVERSATION ON OTHER MATTERS, I TOLD HIM I HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO RAISE TWO ADDITIONAL ISSUES: ARMENTS PURCHASES, AND POLICE BRUTALITY. RECALLING THAT WE HAD DISCUSSED THE LATTER IN A PREVIOUS CONVERSATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, I MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY CASE OF MAJOR BARAHONA'S PUBLIC ADMISSION THAT HE HAD SEVERELY BEATEN UP COLOMBIAN SUBJECT

CHARGED WITH NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. I SAID BARAHONA'S STATEMENT HAD BEEN REPORTED, AND HAD UNDERSTANDABLY CAUSED INTEREST IN THE US AND OTHER COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE HONDURAS HAS HAD SUCH A GOOD HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEGUCI 02440 231707Z

2. MELGAR RESPONDED THAT THE CASE OF MAJOR BARAHONA WAS INDEED UNFORTUNATE, INVOLVING NOT ONLY POLICE BRUTALITY BUT ACCEPTANCE OF A BRIBE. HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT NOT ONLY DOES NOT CONDONE BARAHONA'S ACTIONS, IT CONDEMNS THEM. HIS ACTIONS WERE THOSE OF AN INDIVIDUAL, NOT OF THE GOVERNMENT. MELGAR SAID THAT HE, PERSONALLY, IS UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE MENTALITY THAT RESULTS IN SUCH BEHAVIOR. HE RECALLED THAT HE HAD, IN EFFECT, BEEN IN

CHARGE OF THE NATIONAL POLICE (FUSEP) WHEN HE HAD BEEN MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT UNDER THE LOPEZ ARELLANO REGIME, AND THAT HE HAD RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE HELP AND ASSISTANCE FROM THE US. HE ASKED IF THERE IS SOME WAY SELECTED POLICE OFFICIALS CAN BE SENT TO THE US FOR TRAINING.

3. TURNING TO THE ISSUE OF ARMS PURCHASES, I RECALLED MELGAR'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER IN WASHINGTON LAST SEPTEMBER, AND REITERATED THE US INTEREST, AS EXPRESSED BY PRESIDENT CARTER, IN AN EARLY AND AMICABLE SOLUTION TO THE HONDURAN/EL SALVADOR BORDER DISPUTE. I SAID THAT WE HOPE THAT NOTHING BE DONE TO HINDER THE SPIRIT OF THE EL POY MEETING BETWEEN MELGAR AND THE PRESIDENT OF EL SALVADOR, OR TO RETARD THE CURRENT MEDIATION EFFORTS. MELGAR SAID THERE ARE MANY RUMORS THAT HONDURAS PLANS ADDITIONAL ARMS ACQUISITIONS, AND THAT HE HAS EVEN BEEN QUESTIONED ABOUT THIS BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE. ONE OF THE PROBLEMS IS THAT OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN OFFERING ARMS SALES, ON VERY FAVORABLE TERMS. HE DISCLOSED THAT PERU HAD RECENTLY BEEN VERY PERSISTENT IN SEEKING TO SELL AIRCRAFT TO HONDURAS ON TERMS SO ATTRACTIVE THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO REFUSE THEM.

4. MELGAR SAID THAT THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS THAT HONDURAS DOES NOT CONTEMPLATE ANY NEW MAJOR ARMS ACQUISITIONS BECAUSE IT CANNOT AFFORD TO DIVERT FUNDS NEEDED FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. BUT HONDURAS DOES WANT TO BUY SMALL SHIPS FROM THE US TO PATROL ITS COAST, AS A DEFENSIVE MEASURE. ADDRESSING HIMSELF
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEGUCI 02440 231707Z

TO EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE BORDER PROBLEM, MELGAR SAID HE HAD BEEN VERY OPTIMISTIC SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, AND WAS CONFIDENT THAT AN AGREEMENT WOULD BE SIGNED IN LATE JUNE OR EARLY JULY. DESPITE THE CHANGE IN THE SALVADORAN POSITION, MELGAR SAID, THERE ARE STILL SOME ENCOURAGING SIGNS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE CHIEF OF STATE'S FORMER OPTIMISM HAS DISAPPEARED.

5. KEY MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRY TEAM AND I HAD RESERVATIONS CONCERNING THE INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED IN STATE 122854, BECAUSE IT APPEARED TO US THAT WE WERE OVER-REACTING ON BOTH ISSUES. ALTHOUGH I DREW UPON MOST OF THE TALKING POINTS INCLUDED IN THE INSTRUCTION, I DELIBERATELY OMITTED ANY MENTION OF THE PURCHASES OF SUPER MYSTERE AIRCRAFT, AND MELGAR MADE NO REFERENCE TO THEM. IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE US GOVERNMENT HAS ACQUIESCED IN THE PREVIOUS ISRAELI SALES OF THESE AIRCRAFT TO HONDURAS, IT SEEMS TO ME WE ARE NOT IN A VERY STRONG POSITION TO CONDEMN THEM IN RETROSPECT. AS FAR AS SALES OF TWO ADDITIONAL SUPER MYSTERES ARE CONCERNED, WHICH THE US HAS ALREADY APPROVED, WE HAVE NO INFORMATION THAT THE GOH INTENDS TO CONCLUDE THESE PURCHASES IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND, JUDGING FROM MELGAR'S COMMENTS, THE GOH MAY NOT NOW INTEND TO DO SO.
JARAMILLO

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, ARMS SHIPMENTS, POLICE POWERS, ATROCITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TEGUCI02440
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780218-0119
Format: TEL
From: TEGUCIGALPA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780527/aaaaawkc.tel
Line Count: 116
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 77754698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 122854
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2596543
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONVERSATION WITH THE CHIEF OF STATE: ARMS ACQUISITIONS AND POLICE BRUTALITY
TAGS: PINR, SHUM, SNAR, MASS, MORG, MPOL, XK, HO, US, (MELGAR CASTRO, JUAN ALBERTO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/77754698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014